

Faculty Senate University System Relations Committee
February 14, 2018

Present: Misty Anderson, Chis Boyer, Martin Griffin, Yvonne Kilpatrick, Beauvais Lyons, Bruce MacLennan, Sally McMillan, and Gary Skolits,

Absent: Husheng Li and Andrea Ludwig

Guest: Noma Anderson, Special Advisor to the President on Diversity and Inclusion

1. Approve minutes of last meeting
Lyons motion, Anderson second. Unanimously approved.
2. Anderson provided a PowerPoint overview of the work that she does. The slides are provided as an addendum to the minutes.

Conversation with the committee centered on questions about the system-wide student climate survey. Anderson also provided a handout that provides more detail on the vendor that conducted the study. That summary is also provided as an addendum. Anderson will provide a more detailed summary of the study findings for the Knoxville campus on February 21 from 3-5 p.m. She also indicated that survey data will be available for secondary review.

Additional topics of discussion included the need for diversity work to be done at the campus level and for faculty members to be encouraged to use their disciplinary expertise to address campus challenges. M. Anderson indicated that faculty are working on a Knoxville-campus survey and agreed to share that survey with N. Anderson.

After the meeting, N. Anderson sent a link to a hearing that was discussed during the USRC committee. The video is available at: http://tnga.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=393&clip_id=14351. The portion she referenced started about 48 minutes into the session. Among other things, the discussion included reference to legislators who reported that some of their constituent students who are conservative feel that their voices are not heard in classrooms at UT. Members of the USRC pushed back on this asking whether it was necessary to allow patently false positions in classrooms (e.g., "I believe in unicorns"). N. Anderson indicated that was not what she was suggesting, but that it is important to make sure that all views (even wrong-headed ones) are heard with respect as well as being refuted with scientific evidence.

3. McMillan provided a brief report on the 5 February Advancement and Public Affairs Committee meeting. Offices of communication, government relations, and the UT foundation presented reports. The president also gave a brief report that focused primarily on the impending search for a new Vice President of the UT Foundation. In the context of this agenda item, the USRC committee briefly discussed the proposed bill for reorganization of the board of trustees and stressed the

importance of communicating with legislators about the importance of faculty and student representation. Lyons reported on a communication effort that will provide legislators with testimonials from former faculty and student trustees about their role on the board.

4. Other – McMillan announced that Vice President Martin will meet with the committee in March and Associate VP Carpenter will meet with the group in April.